ESSAYS ON THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS OF ANAESTHESIA—Volume II—W. Stanley Sykes, M.B.E., M.B., B.Chir. (Cantab.), D.A., Late Anaesthetist to the General Infirmary at Leeds, to the Hospital for Women and St. James' Hospital, Leeds, to the Leeds Dental Hospital, to the Halifax Royal Infirmary and to the Dewsbury General Hospital. The Williams & Wilkins Co., Baltimore 2, Maryland, exclusive U. S. agents, 1961. 187 pages, $7.00.

The first volume of Sykes' "Essays on the First Hundred Years of Anaesthesia" whetted one's appetite for more and the second volume which is now out does not disappoint. The seventeen essays are unrelated except in very general terms and deal with various phases of the subject—historical, pharmacological, technical, biographic and historical.

Chapter I, "Thirty-seven little things which have all caused death," deals in interesting fashion with the accidents and hazards of anesthesia during its developmental stages and gives a fair sample of what is to come. Dr. Sykes is a natural writer—witty, precise and forceful. The book, aside from being impeccably documented, makes excellent reading. It is illustrated with numerous interesting plates depicting the various phases of the discussions.

ARTHUR L. BLOOMFIELD, M.D.

* * *

A COURSE IN EPIDEMIOLOGY—I. I. Elkin. Contributors: A. Ya. Alymov, I. I. Elkin, S. V. Guslits, A. I. Nemirovskaya, I. R. Stepanov, V. M. Zhdanov. Translated from the Russian by C. R. Pringle, Ph.D. Pergamon Press Inc., 122 East 55th Street, New York 22, N. Y., 1961. 518 pages, $12.00.

This text is said to provide the teaching content in epidemiology provided by the Sanitary and Hygiene Faculties of the Medical Institutes of the U.S.S.R. It stresses the epidemiology of communicable diseases and presents viewpoints which have many similarities and many divergencies with epidemiological concepts of this country. There is no indication that the principles of epidemiology in the U.S.S.R. extend to the noncommunicable diseases as is true in the U.S.A., Canada and Great Britain.

Stress is laid on the procedures of isolation of clinical cases and disinfection. In our Western epidemiology, the principle of interreactions of etiological agent, host and environment are emphasized and greater emphasis is laid on inapparent infections and the breadth of the "infection spectrum" or biological gradient. Thus, in the discussion of epidemic meningococcus meningitis this text, while indicating importance of carriers, recommends their detection by bacteriological means, which we have largely abandoned as impractical. There is no mention of mass prophylaxis by means of the sulfas which we have found essential for military and closed population groups.

In control of poliomyelitis the text states that hospitalization of polio patients in isolation wards or rooms is essential, with disinfection of feces, laundry and remains of food. Moreover, the patients must remain hospitalized for at least forty days. Salk vaccine is urged, but there is no mention of live vaccine, probably reflecting the time it takes for a text to be written and translated (original text "Kuz Epidemiologii" was published in 1958).

While the discussions of influenza and vaccination (including consideration of "Asian influenza") are in line with our Western views, the use of living influenza vaccine rather than of our killed vaccine understandably is stressed. On the other hand, there is no direct mention of hemolytic streptococcal disease and, indeed, scarlet fever is thought to be due to the association of a specific virus with *Str.* haemolyticus. Emphasis again is on isolation since "the causative agent of scarlet fever is still unknown." Thus, penicillin is not even mentioned.

The discussions of the zoonotic diseases are especially interesting and will give many valuable views, especially those related to recognizing and dealing with "epidemic foci." These "epidemic foci" also are emphasized in the "anthroponotic" (man-to-man) infections. Here, however, the problems of "inapparent" infections are not stressed as greatly as we do. The forms used in investigating outbreaks of diseases are detailed and are of notable interest.

Thus the "scientific" concepts and especially their relationships to the patterns of medical and public health patterns of the U.S.S.R. are fascinating. An interesting feature is the frequency with which possible application to bacteriological warfare is indicated. In very many places in the text the authors incorporate blatant Soviet propaganda. This is a behavioral trait we have not seen in the Russian scientists who have visited the U.S.A., nor has it been mentioned by our counterpart scientists who have visited Russia. Certainly, our papers and texts of epidemiology emphasize the importance of social-environmental influences, but we are not accustomed to see them as part of a "party line." However, here are a few of the large number of relevant quotations:

Page 55: "Engels in his book, 'The Position of the Working Class in England,' gives detailed proof that capitalistic crises are responsible for huge epidemics of typhus fever, scarlet fever and other diseases."

Page 56: "The ruin and impoverishment of most of the population in capitalistic countries, and the continued pillage of colonial and dependent territories, wars (which are unavoidable under the capitalistic system) and unemployment will likewise favor the occurrence of epidemics in the future. In capitalistic countries scientific discoveries in the field of prophylaxis and control of infectious diseases are used only in the interest of the ruling class, and the achievements of science are not available to most of the population."

Page 77: "Bourgeois epidemiology has proved incapable of understanding the essential relation of epidemics to the class structure of society."

Page 76: ". . . the Soviet system itself is the best guarantee of successful solution of the problems which arise in the prophylaxis of infectious diseases. The fundamental economic law of socialism is maximum satisfaction of ever-increasing material and cultural requirements of society by continual expansion and improvement of socialist production."

It is with great difficulty that this reviewer ceases his quotations. He will conclude merely by observing that in the section on staphylococcal food poisoning, no mention is made of refrigeration of appropriate food stuffs. Perhaps this is realistic in view of the absence of "capitalistic refrigerators" among the population of socialist Soviet countries.

CHARLES E. SMITH, M.D.

* * *

HANDBOOK ON CLINICAL ELECTROMYOGRAPHY—Robert B. Pearson, M.D., Associate Professor of Physiology, Loma Linda University School of Medicine. The Meditron Company (a Division of Crescent Engineering & Research Company), 5440 North Peck Road, El Monte, California, 1961. Paperbound book—72 pages. No price quoted.

One increasingly reads of electrical measurements reflecting nerve and muscle function, not only in clinical medicine and dentistry, but in other biological fields, notably experimental psychology.

There have been few sources giving the nonspecialist a brief but comprehensive view of electromyography. This little book, which can be read completely in a short time, describes equipment and guiding principles for its use in analysis of clinical nerve and muscle problems. It is a useful introduction and serves well in preparation for more detailed studies.

SANFORD E. FELDMAN, M.D.